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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 008249

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [AS](#) [ID](#)  
SUBJECT: INDONESIA EXPELS TWO AMCITS FROM PAPUA

REF: A. JAKARTA 8058 (ARREST OF BRIAN KEANE)

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 8059 (ARREST OF CASEY BOX)

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Classified By: B. Lynn Pascoe, Ambassador. Reason: 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. The Indonesian government's detention and expulsion of two Amcits who had planned to attend a Papuan indigenous group's conference illustrates Jakarta's increasing sensitivity about alleged foreign support for separatism. This suspicion has increased markedly since the Australian government's March 23 decision to grant temporary asylum to 42 Papuans. Although the two Amcits were not physically mistreated, the GOI's handling of the affair will reinforce the GOI's image in some NGO circles as a repressive and paranoid regime. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Amcits Brian Keane and Casey Box, members of Land Is Life (a Cambridge, Massachusetts-based NGO), were detained by police in Jayapura, Papua on June 26, and subsequently expelled from Indonesia on June 29. They had arrived in Jayapura on June 25 at the invitation of the Papua Traditional Council (Dewan Adat Papua or DAP, an indigenous rights group whose leaders are longstanding contacts of ours). This account of the incident is based on information provided by Mr. Keane and by DAP leaders, who were in touch with the Embassy by cell phone as events unfolded.

[1](#)3. (C) Mr. Keane said he had met DAP members attending a UN-sponsored conference on indigenous rights in the U.S. He received an invitation to the DAP's Congress in Jayapura on relatively short notice. He and Land Is Life intern Casey Box flew from the US to Jakarta, where they were granted an Indonesian visa on entry, and immediately continued to Jayapura, arriving on early on June 25. On June 26, after a day of resting from their long trip, their presence attracted the attention of the Jayapura police, who check hotel registers for the presence of foreign visitors on a daily basis. When police learned that the pair were in Jayapura to attend the DAP event, they detained and questioned them for several hours. The police, Keane reported, seemed to be looking for a legal pretext to arrest them.

[1](#)4. (C) The Americans were turned over to the immigration service, which subjected them to another lengthy interrogation. Keane said that both at the police station and immigration office, a large number and variety of persons tried to insert themselves into the proceedings, including unidentified plainclothes government officials, Kopassus, DAP members, drunken locals, and journalists. On June 27, there

was extensive coverage, featuring photos, in the Indonesian papers including the prestigious daily Kompas. Keane said that they were reassured by the presence of the DAP members, who provided a cell phone, enabling them to contact the Embassy on the evening of June 26.

15. (C) The immigration authorities, Keane said, told them that attending the DAP congress was a political activity incompatible with the purpose of the visa they had been issued. Keane and Box were therefore escorted by an immigration officer to Jakarta on a Tuesday afternoon flight.

Arriving in Jakarta near midnight on Tuesday, June 27, they were met and interviewed by Conoff, who accompanied them to the Immigration holding center, where they spent the night. On June 28, Conoff and Box met briefly with Muhammad Indra, Secretary of the Directorate of Immigration. Indra said that Keane and Casey were being expelled because they had become involved with an organization whose activities were "sensitive" to the government of Indonesia. Conoff then met with Keane and Box to finalize arrangements for their departure from Indonesia. After a second night in Immigration custody, the Amcits left Indonesia early on the morning of June 29.

16. (C) Comment: This episode illustrates the central government's increasing sensitivity to foreigners' activities in Papua in the wake of Australia's March 23 extension of temporary asylum to 42 Papuans. This suspicion has taken other forms. In recent months, diplomats from the Netherlands and New Zealand, as well as AusAid personnel, have been refused permission to travel to Papua. Diplomats granted permission to travel are warned sternly about the hazards of meeting with some local NGOs such as the DAP, and are strongly encouraged to provide detailed schedules to the Department of Foreign Affairs. We received permission to conduct a visit the week of July 10, but had to meet with Foreign Ministry officials for the first time to hear

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warnings about conducting ourselves properly. We declined their offers of assistance to make appointments and provide a detailed appointment schedule. This incident also illustrates the short-sightedness of the central government on these issues. Rather than permitting Keane and Box to attend the DAP conference (a completely legal event) and to reach their own conclusions about conditions in Papua, the GOI has reinforced its image as a repressive and paranoid regime, at least as far as Papua is concerned. We assume that the two Land Is Life staffers' experiences will spread among Papua watchers in the NGO community and on Capitol Hill. End comment.  
PASCOE